

Rappe Hotel
(General Greene Hotel)
(Greensburger Hotel)
40 North Pennsylvania Avenue
Greensburg
Westmoreland County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5192

HABS
PA,
65-GREEB,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DOCUMENTARY RECORDING OF
RAPPE HOTEL (THE GENERAL GREENE HOTEL) (GREENSBURGER HOTEL)
GREENSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

HABS
PA,
65-6222,
1-

HABS No. PA-5192

I. WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION:

The hotel is an eight-story square building having seven bays on each of its three sides and in the rear a recessed center with two double bays, one on either side of the opening and continuing within the recessed section as well. The rear inside windows face one another as if in a courtyard. Construction material consists of long narrow buff brick in running bond.

The eighth floor has a pent roof having eleven frame dormers. Each dormer has a Greek Revival pediment. (The nine front and side pediments have broken scroll tops while the rear two are unbroken pediments.) The roof, of mansard variation, has two sky lights at the very top.

The seven bay square windows on front and two sides have stone keystone lintels at the tops of most of them and plain stone lintels at the bottoms of the windows. The double rear windows have arched tops with bricks set in keystone fashion.

The two first floor doorways had marquees over them. This first floor has a more recent facade, which if removed would expose the unaltered original surface.

Right below the seventh floor is a large projecting Italianate Victorian Cornice. On the first level is another ornate cornice, not as wide as the above overshadowing one. Iron Victorian winding fire escapes were attached to three sides of the building from the first floor all the way up to the pent roof.

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The interior of the building has the original woodwork, but the carpeting has obviously been changed at some point in time. Most of the hotel furnishings have been removed. A series of stained glass windows adorn the first floor level below the cornice. Additional stained glass windows are in perfect condition at the landings of the staircase. The architect, John Sakal, was apparently not considered a master of his profession. A check with both the Carnegie Library and Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation revealed no information or knowledge of John Sakal.

Prior to the turn of the century, the site of the General Greene Hotel had been occupied by the Laird House, also known as the Borlin House. James Borlin was the proprietor. The first laundry in Greensburg was located in the basement of the house.

The house was a popular location for drummers who came to Greensburg by train. They then rented a horse and buggy for peddling their wares throughout the area. A horse drawn survey provided transportation between the railroad station and the Laird House.

On a winter night, fire destroyed the block along Pennsylvania Avenue. Apparently, sparks leaped across the street and ignited the Laird House. By the next day the house had been completely consumed and only rubble remained.

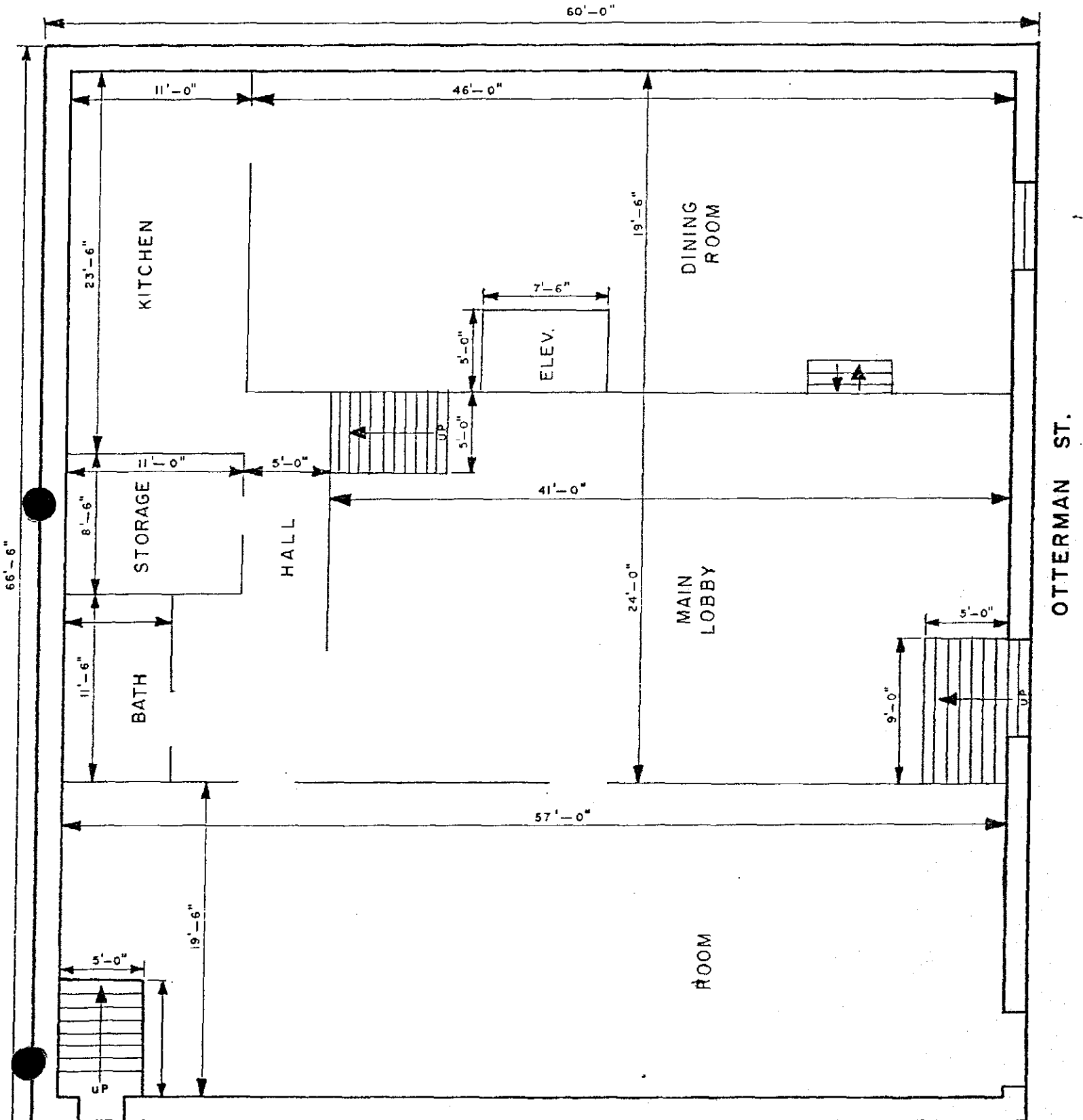
For years the only remnant of the house was the foundation until 1903, when Rappe Myers purchased the site and constructed the Rappe Hotel.

In its heyday the hotel was renowned for its fine cuisine, especially the wild game. Fruits and vegetables for the hotel dining were grown on the nearby farm of the owner. It was considered the most modern in accommodations and convenience until 1923 when the \$1,000,000 Penn Albert Hotel was built.

The Rappe Hotel was renamed the Greensburger Hotel and then later renamed the General Greene Hotel by its present owner.

GENERAL GREENE HOTEL MAIN FLOOR PLAN

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PENNSYLVANIA AVE.

SCALE: 1/8" = APPROX. 1'-0"
NOTE: ALL OUTSIDE WALLS APPROX
18" THICK, INSIDE WALLS 4"
DRAWN BY: J. M. T. III 4-5-B3

GENERAL GREEN HOTEL TYPICAL UPPER FLOOR PLAN

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